

Withholding of Grain Payments

the repeal of this act was to be effective as at that date has been known to the House for many months. I ask the House, as I ask it each day that the bill is before it, to allow these issues to come to a vote in this House.

So that there is no misunderstanding about this, let me repeat that we would not feel, as I said to the committee on June 18, that we could necessarily go forward with these proposals, including the immediate payment of money to the prairie farmers, without the support of the House. We could not continue, without reviewing our position, to act as it would be proper to act, with the approval of the House, in repealing the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act effective July 31, 1970. If that proposition is not in due and reasonable course permitted to come to a vote, if this filibuster grows and continues, then we would have no alternative but—

Mr. Peters: Go to the country.

Mr. Lang:—to accept that our attempt to improve the situation of the prairie farmers under Bill C-244 has not been possible. We would say to the people that we believe that responsibility for the delay, for the obstruction, was that of the opposition in not letting these matters come to a vote.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the minister but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The minister knows that he cannot pursue his remarks unless he has unanimous consent to do so. Does the House agree to allow the minister to continue his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): There does not seem to be agreement. The hon. member for Yukon.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, hon. members opposite cry "Shame", but I have been sitting here, as we all have, listening to the minister for the past 30 minutes and expecting to hear some defence of the unlawful actions of the government. I have heard absolutely no defence. For 30 minutes the minister spoke of reverting to the law as it stood, an astonishing statement coming from a dean of law. He spoke of the legislation being bad. I should not have to point out to this dean of law that, whether legislation be bad or good, it is still the law of the land. I know that he cannot be an example of the product of the law school of which he was dean. I cannot bring myself to believe that he is the sort of graduate that that distinguished law school turns out.

The justice minister issued a news release dated today announcing a national conference on the law. The opening statement of that news release is as follows: "Our legal profession must respond promptly and creatively to the fact that society is our client".

Mr. Olson: Get back to wheat.

Mr. Stanfield: We are not on wheat, we are on the law.

Mr. Nielsen: If society is the client of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), this dean of law and this government, then I can only say it is deserving of much better counsel than it is getting.

The motion before the House states that the government is bound by the laws of this Parliament, as are the citizens of this country, and condemns the government for its deliberate flouting of the provisions of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. I want to deal with some of the reasons that I believe have brought Parliament to its low level and to the low regard in which it is held by the people of Canada.

Mr. Hogarth: With your contribution you should know.

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Hogarth) is very fond of interjecting while seated, but if he would have the spine to get up and take part in this debate I would think a lot more of him. However, I shall have something to say generally about the courage of hon. members opposite.

Mr. Hogarth: I do not doubt that. You are a great man when it comes to courage.

Mr. Nielsen: I will compare my background and courage with that of any member on the opposite side, particularly the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I have spoken before, Sir, of the concern which I have had for the transformations that are taking place in our form of government, a concern which is being shared by ever increasing numbers of Canadians throughout this country.

● (4:50 p.m.)

The subject matter of this motion of non-confidence is another manifestation of the wilful and deliberate destruction of responsible government as we have known it and the emasculation of this House of Commons which is supposed to be the instrument by which our democratic way of life should be protected. The process of erosion began under the previous Prime Minister. I thought then that matters were approaching the danger point and that an aroused public opinion was required in order to bring to a halt the objective of that government to arrogate all power unto itself. That did not come about. In the course of the last three years, however, the rapidity with which the present Prime Minister accelerated the process of destruction presents, in my view, the single most dangerous occurrence which is concerning Canadians today. This is being brought about by a man who, in my view, is the most dangerous Prime Minister in Canada's history.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: To quote him, he is a man who believes it to be:

... conceivable that a benevolent despot might rule wisely, establish a just order for all his subjects, and leave them enough freedom of expression.

The rub there is, by whose standards are we to determine whether his rule is wise? By whose standards are we to determine whether the order established by such a despot is just and by what and whose standards are we to